



STORIES of HOPE

CAMBODIA



Lorn Khoeun's food selling business is supported by community members.

Lorn Khoeun, an HIV-positive 35-year-old from Tanuk village, witnessed the positive impact of the PEPFAR-supported community forum in her village.



Reducing Stigma and Discrimination Against People Living with HIV/AIDS

Under national strategies and in coordination with local partners, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) is supporting efforts to break down the barriers of stigma that impede access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. With support from the Emergency Plan, Pact Cambodia has partnered with the Cambodia People Living with HIV/AIDS Network to implement the Community Response to Reducing HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination Project. The goal of the project is to use community fora to educate community members about HIV/AIDS. With the participation of the Provincial Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, community empowerment workers, and support group leaders, the community fora focus on awareness-raising and planned responses to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination. More than 200 participants, including home care providers, local authorities, people living with HIV/AIDS, monks, commune councils, community members, home care network representatives and officials from the Provincial AIDS Office, attend each of the fora.

Lorn Khoeun, an HIV-positive 35-year-old from Tanuk village, witnessed the positive impact of the PEPFAR-supported community forum in her village. After losing her husband to an HIV/AIDS-related illness three years ago, Lorn Khoeun and her daughter faced stigma and discrimination from members of the community as a result of Lorn Khoeun's HIV-positive status. Neighbors were afraid to buy watermelons or food from Lorn Khoeun, and her food selling business suffered as a result. Lorn Khoeun and fellow community members attended the community forum in her village where they discussed HIV/AIDS awareness; stigma and discrimination; HIV/AIDS law; and raising and mobilizing support for people living with HIV/AIDS from communities, local authorities, health care providers and opinion leaders.

Since the forum, community members have altered their behavior and are more supportive of people living with HIV/AIDS. They are also friendlier towards Lorn Khoeun, buying her food and products, visiting her house, playing with her children, and eating together with her. Now, she can continue her business and support her daughter.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

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